

living. We need help. My colleagues, please respond and bring Ludwig Koons home.

SUPPORT WELFARE REFORM

(Mr. CRANE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the bill of the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) on welfare reform that was introduced yesterday. The bill strongly supports the President's priorities on welfare reform.

Welfare reform has been a tremendous success. The best welfare program for families and children is a good-paying job. Since welfare reform was passed in 1996, more people are off welfare and working, and child poverty is down significantly. But there is still more we can do. This bill will continue building on the successes we have had. It will strengthen families and protect children. It will help most people get off welfare who are in that condition today and back to work. It will encourage States to be innovative so they can help more families.

This is a good bill and I urge my colleagues to support it.

LOOPHOLE EXPLOITATION ACT

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the House will vote on a piece of legislation that has been named the Taxpayer Protection Act. It would be more properly described as the "Loophole Exploitation Act" because it is designed to undermine the new bipartisan campaign finance law before that law can even take effect.

It will encourage the development of a new form of political committee that will not have to disclose its activity at either the Federal or State level. This will be a type of committee for which Federal officials are encouraged to raise funds, and yet no one will know the full extent of such a committee's activities.

That is why Public Citizen, Common Cause, and the Campaign for America have said "there is only one way to oppose the fatally flawed 527 provisions, which open a gaping loophole in our campaign finance disclosure laws, and that is to vote 'no' on H.R. 3391." I hope my colleagues will do that. We must maintain the bipartisan spirit of reform and reject this very unfortunate piece of legislation.

HONORING MAURICIO J. TAMARGO

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on August 30, 1961, a young Cuban boy named Mauricio Tamargo fled the Castro tyranny with his family, in search of freedom and liberty here in the United States. His belief in the American dream gave him the strength to persevere during the harsh winters of Wisconsin, as he stood for hours at the corner selling newspapers to help his parents with his seven brothers and sisters.

Today, Mauricio will be officially sworn in as the chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

For over a decade, Mauricio has been my most valuable advisor and confidant. As a result, I hated the thought of his leaving, but when the President nominated him for this distinguished post, I knew for the good of the country he had to go.

Mauricio is not only an excellent jurist, he is someone who embraces and cherishes law as a compass for his life. He is not only intelligent and dedicated to the service of our country, he is a man of integrity and honor. His journey from refugee child to his current post is a testament to our great country and a vivid example that the American dream can indeed become a reality for all of us.

May Mauricio serve as an inspiration to future generations. Godspeed, my friend. Felicidades, Mauricio.

NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, today across the country, thousands of students on our college campuses are silent. They are silent as a sign of solidarity of persons who, because of their sexual orientation and gender identification, cannot speak for themselves. They are silent as a form of protest against a society that silences persons who are different, persons who do not meet main street's definition of proper.

They are silent, but we in Congress should not be. We should shout and raise our voices and call for an end to discrimination and prejudice against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons. We should affirm loudly that by this day of silence, America has the capacity and the heart to say to all persons are just that, persons; and all persons are deserving of fair treatment. In closing, I would like to thank two gentlemen from my district, Bruce Carlson and Matt Friday, for their dedication to such causes, and recognize the instrumental role they play in creating a nation free of prejudice.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN BY THE NUMBERS

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to share with you some disturbing numbers regarding the shipping of high-level nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

First, let me tell you it will take over 96,000 truck and rail shipments for this material to get there. These shipments will go through 44 States, 703 counties, and at least 109 major population cities. More than 7 million people live within one-half mile of the nuclear transportation routes. Close to 50 million people live within 3 miles of these shipping routes. And contrary to what the DOE espouses, nuclear waste currently stored at 77 reactor and storage sites in 39 States, is not just going to magically appear at Yucca Mountain. These shipments will come through your communities for over 38 years.

The cost associated with cleaning up just one accident in your community is over \$13.7 billion taxpayer dollars, not counting the health care costs associated with those affected.

That is the story, Mr. Speaker, by the numbers. The sad truth is these numbers just do not add up to a plan which protects the safety and security of all Americans. I urge my colleagues to oppose the Yucca Mountain bill.

EXPANDING EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we approach April 15, the deadline for filing income tax, I have introduced a bill, H.R. 3742, legislation to expand the earned income tax credit for childless workers.

This bill would significantly strengthen the credit's ability to reward and encourage work for millions of low-income people.

H.R. 3742 would improve the EITC for childless workers in two important respects. First, it would double the credit percentage to 15.3 percent and extend it to apply to the first \$7,000 in wages that a worker earns. This would provide workers with new relief from the substantial payroll tax burden they currently bear.

While we await enactment, I would also encourage low-income people to make sure they file for their earned income tax credit.

ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH WELFARE REFORM

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I have been looking forward to today for quite some time. Today we are introducing the welfare reform bill that will build upon the successes of our historic 1996 reforms.